

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
/059 W

-----103948 210434Z /65

R 210330Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6645
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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EO 11652; NA
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AF
SUBJ: FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF DAOUD'S INAUGURATION PASSES QUIETLY

1. FEBRUARY 15, THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD DAOUD'S INAUGURATION AS FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN PASSED REMARKABLY QUIETLY, SO MUCH SO THAT THE AFGHAN LEADER HIMSELF DID NOT MAKE A SPEECH OR EVEN ISSUE A STATEMENT. ALTHOUGH THE DAY WAS A NATIONAL HOLIDAY, THERE WERE NO CEREMONIES OR PARADES, NOR ANY OTHER OUTWARD SIGN MARKING THE OCCASION. PRESS TREATMENT WAS RELATIVELY RESTRAINED, AND WAS ESSENTIALLY LIMITED TO BRIEF ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS REMINISCING OVER LAST YEAR'S EVENTS. HOWEVER, ONE PRESS COMMENTARY BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMERCE HAMIDULLAH TARZI FIRED NUMEROUS BROADSIDES AT THE "AVARICIOUS, UNETHICAL, AND UNSCRUPULOUS OPPORTUNISTS" WHO HAD COMPRISED THE PREVIOUS REGIME. PHOTOS OF LAST YEAR'S INAUGURATION DAY PARADES WERE PRINTED, AND DAOUD WAS PICTURED WITH HIS USUAL DARK GLASSES, WEARING AN INFORMAL, ALMOST GOOD OL' BOY, OPEN-NECKED SPORT SHIRT.

2. COMMENT: THIS LOW-KEY APPROACH ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS CONTROLLED PRESS IS CONSISTENT
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WITH DAOUD'S PAST EFFORTS TO DEPICT HIMSELF AS A MODEST, PATRIOTIC LEADER OF ALL THE PEOPLE, RATHER THAN AS A REMOTE RULER SHUT OFF FROM THE AFGHAN POPULACE. IN THIS REGARD, THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEBRUARY 18 THAT DAOUD WAS ALSO A TARGET OF THE PLOT WHICH KILLED PLANNING MINISTER KHURRAM LAST NOVEMBER (SEPTEL), SEVERAL TIMES REFERRED TO DAOUD AS THE "NATIONAL LEADER" AND "FOUNDER OF THE REPUBLIC", THUS HIGH-

LIGHTING HIS FATHER-OF-HIS-COUNTRY AND MAN-OF-THE-PEOPLE IMAGE.
ELIOT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INAUGURATION, COMMEMORATIVE CELEBRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KABUL01400
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780077-0658
Format: TEL
From: KABUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780233/aaaabcbn.tel
Line Count: 64
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 390461d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3538630
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF DAOUD'S INAUGURATION PASSES QUIETLY
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/390461d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014